

Melksham Area Board 13th November 2019

Written Update:-

A350 Farmers Roundabout Improvements Scheme

1. Wiltshire Council are please to advise that the site works associated with the A350 Farmers Roundabout Project were completed, and the traffic signals system was activated on Wednesday 16th October 2019.
2. The £3m scheme has been largely funded through the Department for Transport's National Productivity Investment Funding (NPIF).
3. Site operations commenced on Monday 4th February 2019, and the works have been completed within the envisaged 8 to 9 months duration. Works initially focussed on earthworks and carriageway widening within the roundabout island itself, coupled with drainage and ditch clearance works between Farmers Roundabout and the River Avon. Works were then extended to the outer areas of the roundabout and along Western Way where extensive kerb removal and relaying operations were needed. During the summer period full night time road closures allowed the bulk of the carriageway resurfacing operations to be undertaken. More recently the focus shifted towards the installation, testing and commissioning of the traffic signals infrastructure, along with the white lining and signage works.
4. Throughout the scheme the Contractor endeavoured to undertake the works as efficiently as possible whilst minimising the impacts on traffic flows. This entailed restricting those site operations that required lane closures to the day time off peak period (9:30am – 3:00pm), and the use of night works where this was both practical and realistic. The traffic management aspects of the scheme were undoubtedly challenging, but the flexible and responsive approach taken by the Contractor to restrict traffic management durations and lift lane closures during lunch breaks, generally minimised disruption, and peak hour traffic flows were largely unaffected by the works.
5. Challenging ground conditions and the discovery of unforeseen and uncharted buried services did cause problems - especially within the A3102 Bradford Road area. But the Contractor worked hard alongside the Client and Site Supervision Team to redeploy resources and open up new work areas as necessary to mitigate delays as those issues were overcome.
6. The scheme has included for: -
 - The installation of the new traffic signal system at Farmers Roundabout;
 - Road widening works on the approaches to the roundabout, and around the circulatory carriageway;
 - Repair works to the bridge joints at Challeymead Bridge;
 - Drainage and ditch improvement work;
 - Extension and widening works to the merge taper at Semington Road Roundabout;
 - Extensive carriageway resurfacing works extending as far as the A365 junction in the north to Semington Road Roundabout in the south.

7. The works have required: -

- Over 11,000 tonnes of materials being moved (over 550 lorry loads);
- Almost 3 miles of new white lines being laid;
- The location of over 6 miles of buried cables and services;
- Over 3 miles of trenches being dug;
- Work amounting to over 28,000 man hours, spread across 190 day and 90 night shifts;
- Up to 1,000 individual lane closures, with multiple changes each shift to keep traffic moving whenever possible.

8. During the scheme delivery, efforts were made by the Contractor and the wider site team to embark on a series of activities aimed at community liaison and involvement. These activities included: -

- Extensive advanced notices, signage, and news items ahead of the works;
- An initial “Meet the Contractor” event;
- The production and distribution of regular Newsletters to local residents and key stakeholders;
- A site visit by local Town Councillors to help the understanding of the complexity of the work;
- Successful community liaison activity with Manor Primary School which involved a signage design competition and highlighted site safety awareness;
- The provision of recycled road scalplings to local Parish Councils and other stakeholders to assist with community projects and / or public footpath and rights of way maintenance;
- Close liaison with Melksham Town Council with regards to the design, joint funding and installation of the landscaping & planting scheme at the A365 junction, which will hopefully help provide improved visual amenity within that area of the town;
- Suspending or restricting works as necessary to assist and allow for the smooth delivery of civic events e.g. Royal visit 27th September 2019.

9. Since the traffic signals were activated on 16th October 2019, traffic conditions and flows have been monitored and adjustments have been made to seek to optimise the throughput of traffic. At this early stage the indications are that the traffic signal system is operating well, and that traffic conditions have improved. Wiltshire Council will continue to monitor.

10. Wiltshire Council, the Contractor and the wider site team would like to thank all stakeholders including the local Town and Parish Councils, residents, businesses and road users for their patience and tolerance during the implementation of these difficult and complex works.